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SAN SAVINO AT PIACENZA

II. ORNAMENT. CONCLUSIONS

THE ornament of San Savino has suffered even more severely than the structure in the recent restoration, since many of the



FIGURE 4.—EASTERNMOST ALTERNATE PIER ON SOUTH SIDE OF NAVE;
SHOWING CAPITAL WITH INSCRIPTION.

capitals of the main body of the church, mutilated in the barocco period, have been remade or restored. They are orna-

mented with grotesques, rinceaux, interlaces, volutes, acanthus leaves, and other motifs typical of the Lombard style (Figs. 1,¹ 2,¹ 4, 5, 6, 7). They are, as a rule, extremely refined in character; the patterns are small, the composition compact, the whole effect restrained. In this, they fall midway between San Michele of Pavia, and San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro in the same

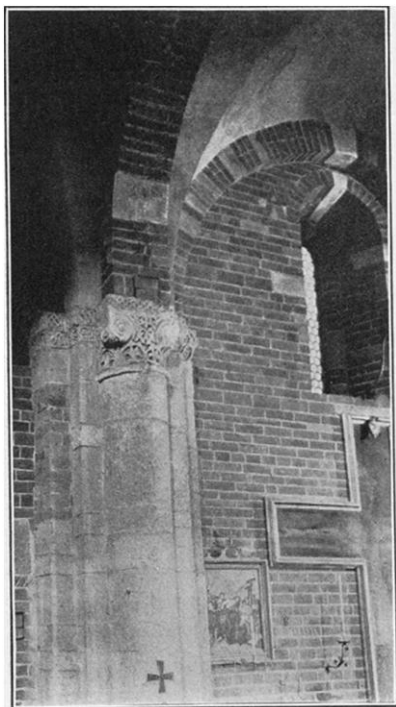


FIGURE 5. — EASTERNMOST RESPOND IN SOUTHERN SIDE AISLE; SHOWING CAPITAL AND SPRINGING OF THE VAULTS.

city, approaching the latter far more closely than the former. The capitals of San Savino all appear to be about contemporary with each other, although those in the western part of the church seem to me to be somewhat later than those in the eastern. Many of these capitals have been restored in whole or in part. In some cases the date has been carved upon the capitals to indicate that they are new, and at present it is generally possible to distinguish the restored portions by the different color of the new stone, as well as by the harder quality of the carving. The capitals which have been most made over appear to be: in the northern side aisle the capitals of three eastern responds; on the north side of the nave, the easternmost

capital at the corner of the choir, the one of intermediate support next to it, and the intermediate support of the centre bay; on the south side of the nave, the eastern capital at the eastern corner of the choir; in the south side aisle the two eastern responds. On the abaci of two of the capitals are

¹ Figures 1, 2, and 3 are in my paper in the last number (XVI, 3) of this *Journal*. See above, p. 361, p. 362, and p. 366.

inscriptions; one (Fig. 4) tells us that the herdsmen gave to Savino the beautiful capital and its column;¹ the second, unfortunately without date, records the construction of the church.² The rail of the crypt entrance is entirely modern.



FIGURE 6. — CAPITAL OF THIRD PIER
FROM WEST ON SOUTHERN SIDE OF
NAVE.

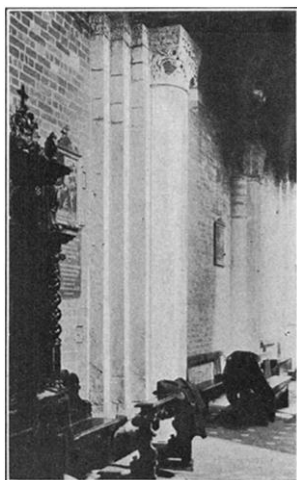


FIGURE 7. — EASTERNMOST AL-
TERNATE RESPOND IN NORTH-
ERN SIDE AISLE.

The capitals of the crypt are of two epochs. The greater number are obviously contemporary with those of the upper church, though, perhaps, some years earlier (Fig. 8). Three, however, are of a style entirely different, and undoubtedly belonged to the church of 903. They are of importance for the history of art of the tenth century, and I give illustrations of two of them (Figs. 9, 10).

¹ CORDE TIBI DULCI DANT
HOC SAVINE BUBULCI
SCILICET HOC BELLU CUM
CESPITE DANT CAPITĒLLŪ

² NUNC RENOVATŪ TIBI
DAMUS SAVINE SEPULCHRUM
HOC TIBI VENUSTUM
ARTE PIETATEQUE TEMPLUM

The most notable ornament of San Savino, however, was the mosaic pavement, considerable fragments of which are still extant. One of these, in the crypt, has been supposed to date from 903. Such, however, cannot be the case. The remains of an earlier apse, and the style of the capitals, make it perfectly clear that the existing crypt is contemporary with the



FIGURE 8. — CAPITAL OF 1107 IN CRYPT.

main body of the church. Now the mosaic was clearly made for this crypt, and is not the remains of an earlier building fitted in at haphazard. Furthermore, the style of the mosaic is entirely analogous to that of the pavements of Cremona, Polirone, Pavia, Aosta, Reggio, Acqui, Ivrea, and Vercelli, all of which are known to be of the late eleventh century or twelfth century, and is, on the other hand, entirely different from that

of the Carolingian mosaics of which we have examples in the Rotunda and S. Pietro of Brescia,¹ and at Santi Felice e Fortunato of Vincenza. In these earlier mosaics, figures are not represented. The design is a purely formal one of squares or other simple patterns in which are inserted inscriptions. Indeed, it is known that in 1066, when Desiderio wished to adorn with mosaics the abbey of Monte Cassino, he was able to find in Italy no mosaic workers capable of executing a pictorial design. It may, therefore, be reasonably inferred

¹ Federico Odorici, *Storie bresciane dai primi tempi sino all' età nostra*. Brescia, Gilberti, 1855. 12 vols. 8vo. II, 220.

that the art of executing pictorial mosaics, even in a pavement, had died out in Italy. It is, in fact, only after the second half of the eleventh century that we find pictorial compositions represented in pavements. The pavement of the cathedral of Murano, an authentically dated example of 1040, shows the state of the art in the first half of the eleventh century. The design is purely formal, and without iconographic significance. In the mosaic of Acqui,¹ now at Turin, we have a monument of the seventh decade of the eleventh century in which there is evident, for the first time, an attempt, crude it is true, to depict definite figures with a certain amount of meaning, although purely formal or grotesque design still occupies the greater part of the composition. In the later pavement of Cremona (executed between 1107 and 1117) the grotesque elements are relegated to a secondary position, and we have a representation of the combat of the virtues and vices according to Prudentius. After this, in the Lombard pavements we find always subjects



FIGURE 9. — CAPITAL OF 903 IN CRYPT.

of grave theological significance, full of iconographical complications, in which grotesques and purely ornamental figures either do not enter, or play a purely subordinate part. It is to these later pavements of the very end of the eleventh or of the twelfth century that the mosaics of Piacenza are analogous, and, in fact, their style is precisely such as we might expect to find in a monument finished in 1107. We shall presently see how closely this pavement is connected with others of about the same date by resemblances of technique and iconography.

¹ Venturi, *Storia dell'arte italiana*, III, 434.

The mosaic of the crypt has been somewhat damaged, but, fortunately, the general lines of the composition are clear enough. It represents the works of the twelve months of the year with the signs of the zodiac. The months begin with January in the northeast corner, and proceed from left to right and downward to December. Each is placed in a circular medallion about which is an inscription. The last ten, from March to December inclusive, are placed apart from the other two in a quadrangle formed by a formal border on three sides, and, on the western side, by a series of genre scenes which I

shall describe later. Within this border, forming a background to the medallions, is a series of zigzag lines, which doubtless, in the thought of the artist, represented the sea. Placed irregularly on this are fish, mermaids, and sirens.¹

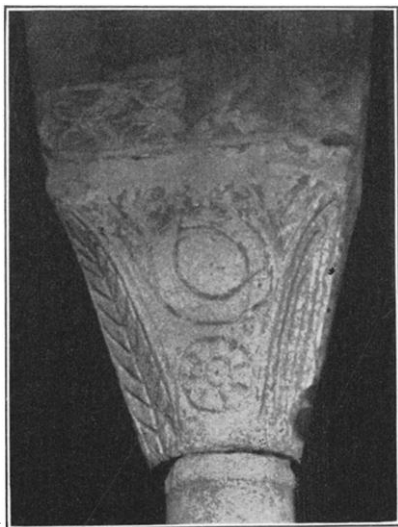


FIGURE 10. — CAPITAL OF 903 IN CRYPT.

Within the border, the medallions of the months are placed in three rows, the eastern and western of which contain three medallions, the central, four. It is obvious that the composition would normally have consisted of three rows of

four medallions, but owing to the fact that the mosaic had to be fitted around four of the crypt columns, the artist was obliged to leave space for these in the first and the last rows, where, accordingly, he was able to put only three medallions. Consequently, two of the months had to be placed outside the quadrangle. The careful manner in which the mosaic is thus adapted to the architecture of the crypt, proves that it was made for its present position and cannot be a remnant of an earlier edifice.

¹ It is, unfortunately, impossible to photograph this mosaic. A water-color by Bozzini has been reproduced in *La Regia Basilica*, Fig. 9, and *Piacenza Monumentale*, p. 43.

The cycle of the months begins with January, placed outside the quadrangle to the east. The representation of the month, which was probably personified by Janus with a double face, has entirely disappeared, but part of the medallion still exists with a fragment of the inscription :

..... SANCIT TROPICVS

This medallion was doubtless depicted as being supported by two figures, one of which, that to the north, is still preserved.

The disk representing February is also outside the square, and was likewise supported by two figures, one of which is preserved entirely, the other only in part. Around the medallion is the inscription :

MENSE NVME IN MEDIO SOLIDI STAT S..... A..... RII

Within the disk, FEBRVARIVS is depicted as pruning the vines, with the sign of the zodiac, the water-pourer, represented in the grotesque manner so dear to the Lombard artists.

The northeast medallion within the quadrangle shows MARCIVS, a man blowing a horn. The sign of the zodiac is two fish. About the disk is inscribed :

PROCDVNT DVPLICES IN MARCIA TEMPORA PISCES.

April holds in his hands two budding shrubs, doubtless emblems of the spring. He is accompanied by a ram, the appropriate sign of the zodiac, and about his disk is the inscription :

RESPICIS APRILIS ARIES FRIXEE KALENDAS.

MAIVS is a youth with a bow and arrows, who leads forth his saddled horse. The sign of the zodiac, a bull, crouches below. About the disk is the inscription :

MAIVS AGENOREI MIRATVR CORNVA TAVRI

In the first disk of the second line is depicted IVNIVS, busily engaged in hoeing. Beside him is the corresponding sign of the zodiac, GEMINI, and about the disk the inscription :

IVNIVS AEQ.....OS CAELO VIDET IRE LACONAS

IVILIVS reaps the grain beside the crab CANCER, a very horrible-looking creature, resembling a lobster; the inscription has been in part destroyed:

SOLSTITIO ARDENT FERT IVLIVS AVSTRVM

AVGVST . . has also been in part mutilated. It is possible to make out a man swinging a hammer and a barrel below him. The sign of the zodiac is a lion, distinguished also by the inscription LEO. About the medallion we read:

AVGVSTVM MENSEM LEO FERVIDVS IGNE PERVRIT

SEPTEMBER picks grapes, which he places in a basket. The sign of the zodiac (Virgo) has entirely disappeared, as has part of the inscription:

SID M SEPTEMBER OPIMAT

The medallions of the westernmost row are all very much mutilated. Of October, there remains only the lowest part of the name . . TVBER and the scales LIBRA. About the disk is a fragmentary inscription:

AEQVAT ET OCTVBER SEMENTIS TE

Of November, there remains only a fragment of the inscription:

. BER NV T IRE NOV

The medallion of December is similarly much mutilated, but it is still possible to distinguish a man skinning a hog and part of a shooting centaur, with the legend SAGITTARIVS. Of the inscription there remains only a part:

TERMIN IGNA DECEM

The inscriptions of these mosaics, thus fragmentary, would offer a number of difficulties of interpretation, were it not for the happy fact that they are taken verbatim from a poem of Ausonius, by means of which it is easy to restore them. This poem is as follows:

Principium Iani sancit tropicus Capricornus.
mense Numae in medio solidi stat sidus Aquari.
procedunt duplices in Martia tempora Pisces.
respicis Apriles, Aries Phryxæ, kalendas.

Maius Agenorei miratur cornua Tauri.
 Iunius aequatos caelo videt ire Laconas.
 solstitio ardentis Cancris fert Iulius astrum.
 Augustum mensem Leo fervidus igne perurit.
 sidere, Virgo, tuo Bacchum September opimat.
 aequat et October sementis tempore Libram.
 Scorpions hibernum praeceps iubet ire Novembrem.
 terminat Arquitenens medio sua signa Decembri.¹

On the western border of the mosaic are represented a number of single figures. To the north, apparently a shooting centaur, much damaged; then a person on horseback holding a lance, who was probably opposed by another similar figure; then two persons apparently wrestling together, two men fighting together with shields and spears, and finally a unicorn and the Virgin, without, however, any hunters.

It is evident that this mosaic is something more than a simple representation of the twelve months and corresponding signs of the zodiac. The key to the interpretation I believe to have found in the *Hexameron*² of St. Ambrose. Here, in speaking of the creation of the sea, the saint calls to mind the words of the Psalmist: "The sea saw it and fled, Jordan was driven back";³ and again: "The waters saw Thee, O God, they were afraid, the depths also trembled, the clouds poured out water."⁴ From these passages, the saint meditates, it is evident that at the command of God the waters come together or separate, fear, flee, or are troubled. At the bidding of the Almighty did not the waters of the Red Sea divide to let the children of Israel pass through in safety? Now, what are the waters, thus obedient to the command of God, but the Church, which gathers its faithful from every swamp, from every valley, from every lake, to unite them in the ocean of the catholic faith? The valleys symbolize heresy and paganism, since the scripture tells us "God is in the mountains, not in the valleys."

Moreover, Ambrose goes on to muse, not only is the ocean the symbol of the Church, but the fish who swim about in the sea are the symbol of the men who live and work and die in

¹ Ausonii, *Eglogarum*, liber V, 9, ed. Schenkl, *M. G. H. Auc. Antiq.* V, 2, 13.

² V. 6-7, ed. Migne, *Pat. Lat.* 14, 225-226. Also *ibid.* III, 1, ed. Migne, 14, 167.

³ Psalm cxiv, 3.

⁴ Psalm lxxvii, 17.

the Church. Christ himself told his apostles that he would make them fishers of men. Thus in the ocean and its finny inhabitants we have a complete image of the Church of God and of human life. We therefore see that it was no chance nor caprice of the artist which led him to inlay on the background representing the sea and its inhabitants the labors of the twelve months, and to represent on the western border, between the unicorn, symbol of Christ, and on the other, the centaur,¹ three scenes of the daily life of men, their struggles and combats.

Other mosaic pavements representing the months thus inlaid on the sea are found at Reggio and at San Michele of Pavia. The cycle of the months without the sea is common in later mediaeval iconography, and is a favorite subject for treatment, especially for the sculptors of the Romanesque and Gothic periods. Indeed, the custom of representing the months plastically goes back to remote antiquity, being found, according to Strykowski,² as early as the thirteenth century B.C. at the Ramesseum of Thebes. From the Egyptians the motive must have passed to the Romans, for the *Tetrastichon Authenticum de Singulis Mensibus*, although it has been ascribed to Ausonius, is undoubtedly as old as the Age of Augustus, and describes such a cycle of plastic representations of the months. However, there are extant no actual examples of such plastic representations of the Roman cycle earlier than the fourth century A.D. Of this period is the mosaic found at Carthage, and now in the British Museum, which has been published by Augustus Wollaston Franks,³ and which contained representations of the twelve months inspired by the *Tetrastichon*. Other similar mosaics of the same time, unfortunately very fragmentary, have been found in Africa and Rome.⁴ Another mosaic, formerly at Sur in the Christian church dedicated in 557 or 652, is now in the

¹ The symbolism of the centaur has never been satisfactorily explained, nor have I been able to find any texts which bear upon it. It is a figure represented perhaps more commonly than any other in mediaeval iconography, and at times, as here, is so used that one strongly suspects that it is not without symbolical significance.

² *Die Calenderbilder des Chronographen vom Jahre 354. Jb. Arch. I. Ergänzungsheft I*, 1888.

³ *Archaeologia*, XXXVIII, 1860, p. 202.

⁴ Strykowski, *op. cit.* p. 50.

Louvre at Paris. Since the style of the workmanship is that of the fourth century, this pavement is believed to have belonged originally to a pagan building, later transformed into a church.¹ The cycle of the months at Sur, however, is of a type entirely different from those in the Roman cycle, and, according to Strzygowski,² can only have been derived from Syrian-Macedonian sources.

The most important extant representation of the months belonging to the fourth century is that of a calendar of 354, published by Strzygowski.³ These drawings make it evident that the Christians adapted the pagan tradition, with very few changes, for the figures in question were evidently directly inspired by the *Tetrastichon* already mentioned. The scenes are extremely complicated, with many symbols referring chiefly to Roman religious observances. Only very rarely do they foreshadow the later types, such as we find in the sculptures and mosaics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, certain features present some slight analogy with Romanesque and Gothic plastic representations, as, for example, the sign of the zodiac placed beside the month of February, and the fact that the figures depicting the summer months, June, July, and August, are naked.⁴

From the fourth century to the end of the eleventh there is extant not a single plastic representation of the cycle of the months. The poets, however, busily occupied themselves with the subject.⁵ Of the many poems which treated of the months, written during the Carolingian era, by all odds the most important is *Martius hic Falcon*, published by Biadene⁶ and supposed by him to be of the time of Bede. Here are many details which strongly recall later representations in art. Thus, March is spoken of as holding a knife ready to prune the vine, April

¹ Julien Durand, 'Mosaïques de Sour,' *Annales Archéologiques*, XXIII, 1863, p. 278; XXIV, 1869, pp. 5, 205.

² Strzygowski, *op. cit.* p. 51.

³ *Op. cit.*

⁴ Strzygowski, *op. cit.* pp. 85-86, gives a most instructive table comparing the subjects of the different cycles.

⁵ A copious bibliography of this complex subject is given by Leandro Biadene, 'Carmina de Mensibus di Bonvesin della Riva.' (*Studii di Filologia Romanza*, Vol. IX, 1903, p. 1.)

⁶ *Op. cit.* p. 95.

hoes the field, May trains the vine, August reaps the harvest, September threshes, October sows, December prepares a hog for the feast. A few other Carlovingian poems have details which suggest, more or less vaguely, Romanesque and Gothic plastic representations. In the *De Mensibus*,¹ March prunes and August brings apples and fruit. The *Officia XII Mensium*,² written probably in the sixth century, tells how March extends his cares to the vines, July matures the fruit, August dries the grain, September gathers the vintage, October treads the grapes, and December slays the swine. In the *Laus Omnium Mensium*,³ April is spoken of as lascivious, and October as the month of the vintage. On the other hand, certain poems of about the same age, such as the *Dira Patet*,⁴ for example, give cycles of the months entirely without analogy with the later mediaeval iconography.

These Carlovingian poems show that at least as early as the sixth century certain of the works of the months had already taken concrete form in a fixed tradition that continued unbroken until the end of the Middle Ages. In literary sources it is possible to trace the types of certain months, notably January and September, to even greater antiquity. In a poem of Ausonius,⁵ January is personified by Janus Bifrons, February by Numa, who sacrifices to the gods of hell (fire), with clasped hands, while September presses the vine. Similarly the *Hic Iani Mensis*,⁶ a work ascribed to the second century, or even to the Augustan period, speaks of January as sacred to Janus, June as naked and reaping the harvest, September as drying the grapes and ripening apples. The *Primus Iane tibi*⁷ also speaks of January as sacred to Janus, and April as the month of Venus and flowers, while October is characterized by the vintage.

From these poems it is clear that the Christian tradition of a cycle of the months, derived from classical and pagan models, early took definite form, and survived throughout the Dark Ages in literature, and hence probably also in painted decoration. There was considerable latitude in the precise manner of

¹ Ed. Baehrens, *M.G.H.*; *P.L.M.* V, 214.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* IV, 290.

⁴ *Ibid.* I, XI, p. 205.

⁵ Ed. Schenkl, *M.G.H.*; *Auc. Antiq.* V², 10.

⁶ Ed. Baehrens, *M.G.H.*; *P.L.M.* I, XII, p. 206.

⁷ *Ibid.* XIII, p. 210.

representing certain of the months, while others were almost invariably given the same characteristics.

About the end of the eleventh century the cycle of the months came to assume great importance in both Oriental¹ and Occidental art. The earliest extant plastic representation of the months in Europe is the fragmentary mosaic of San Michele at Pavia. So little of this is left, however, that the mosaic at Piacenza assumes great importance as the earliest monument in the West, showing the fully developed Romanesque tradition. The months at Piacenza, while not, as we have seen, without analogies to the older cycles, especially in literature, still show certain details which are entirely new, and which were to persist throughout the Middle Ages. Thus, for example, May is shown as a youth who leads forth his horse. The same subject is found in, I believe, nearly all the plastic representations of the months of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries throughout Europe, but earlier than this there is no trace of it. We should be very glad to know whence the artist at Piacenza derived his inspiration for this scene and precisely what is the significance of it. At all events, the influence of such Lombard pavements as those of San Michele, San Savino and Reggio upon the development of Occidental iconography was very great. At Aosta there is a pavement showing the closest possible analogy to that of San Savino, except that there are introduced certain features showing a transition towards the type of representation familiar in French Gothic sculpture. Undoubtedly, the earliest plastic representations of the months in France were in the now destroyed pavements of the Église d'Ainay at Lyon and of Saint Remi at Reims. The mosaic of the months inlaid on the façade of Saint Denis, a fragment of which is still extant in the Musée de Cluny, is said to have been executed by an Italian artist. It is, therefore, entirely probable that the French Gothic sculptors and glass-painters took their inspiration for the cycles of the months from Italian mosaic pavements of the same subject, of which San Savino at Piacenza offers us the only well-preserved example extant.

¹ Josef Strzygowski, 'Die Monatscylen byzantinischer Kunst.' (*Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, XI, 1888, p. 32.)

The conviction that the French cycles were derived from Italian pavements and not from literary sources, is confirmed by a study of the latter. We have already seen that the French cycles approach the pavements much more closely than they do the preceding works in literature. On the other hand, contemporary and subsequent poems seem to have been inspired by the sculptures, rather than the sculptures inspired by them.

Before leaving the subject of the months, a word should be said of the symbolism which is read into the representations of them by Bonvesin della Riva.¹ February trims the vine, as the wise man cuts off sin by confession.² March trains the vine, sows the fields with flax and vegetables, just as whosoever wishes true joy should plant in youth the seeds of virtue that they may solace the rest of his life, etc. This poem, however, appears to be the mystic musing of a poet on sculptures already made and which he had seen, rather than an interpretation of the thought of the artists.

In the choir of San Savino, another mosaic quite as subtle as that of the crypt was discovered during the recent restorations.³ In the centre is represented a seated figure, draped and with beard, holding in his right hand a male head, the flames emanating from which show that it is the Sun, and in his left hand a female head, distinguished as the Moon by the crescent which is above it. The central figure is surrounded by two circles, between which are placed four pairs of animals facing each other. These animals, unfortunately, have been much damaged. Above there are two dogs, each with one paw raised; on either side a sort of griffin with wings faces another grotesque winged figure; below there appear to have been two horses. The outer disk is represented as being held up by a caryatid, and at the four corners are four figures with Phrygian caps,—the two above clinging to the outer circle, and apparently climbing up upon it, the lower two falling head first beneath it. The whole scene is inscribed in a quadrangle. Above is a procession of animals of different kinds, all very much damaged.

¹ Ed. Biadene, *Studi di Filologia Romanza*, Vol. IX, 1903, p. 54.

² Line 25.

³ Illustrated in *La Regia Basilica*, Fig. 11; *Piacenza Monumentale*, p. 44.

To the left of the quadrangle are two scenes. The upper, representing a combat between two warriors with shields and swords, doubtless stands for the virtue of Fortitude. The lower shows a man standing unsteadily, holding in his left hand a staff, in his right an overflowing goblet. Another figure, much damaged, stands beside him, while a third, intoxicated, sprawls on the ground. It must be we have here a representation of the virtue of Temperance, perhaps personified by the standing figure, who refuses to drink, while his companions indulge in excess. To the right of the central quadrangle a king, with the inscription REX, is seated on a throne and carries a sceptre. Before him kneels on one knee a figure reaching his left hand after a piece of parchment which bears the letters LE(X). The right-hand edge of the mosaic is destroyed, but perhaps contained the figure of a judge, since the letters IVD may still be read in the corner. The scene evidently typifies the virtue Justice, but I cannot interpret the exact meaning of the figures. In the space below is a fourth scene, depicting a man playing chess; probably his opponent was represented on the other side, but has been destroyed. The scene is symbolical of the virtue of Prudence. From the chronicle of Fra Salimbene¹ we know that chess was extremely popular in Lombardy in the thirteenth century, and was proverbial as a favorite pastime of astute men.

The meaning of the central figure within the quadrangle is not open to doubt. It is, as in the precisely similar pavement at Aosta, the Year, who holds in his hands the Sun and the Moon. Ever since the time of Boëthius,² the year with its changes and inconstancies has been taken as a symbol of the changeableness and inconstancy of human fortune. However, in this mosaic the year is doubtless also the figure of God. Says Sicardo³: "the year in general stands for Christ, whose members are the four seasons, that is the four Evangelists." The Sun which the Lord here holds in his hands is the mystic symbol of Christ, according to St. Ambrose⁴ and

¹ Ed. Parma, 1857, pp. 26, 51, 186, 217, 359.

² *Phil. Cons.* II, 2, 3, ed. Peiper, 27.

³ *Mitrale*, V, 7, ed. Migne, *Pat. Lat.* 213, 232.

⁴ *Hexameron*, IV, 8, ed. Migne, *Pat. Lat.* XIV, 217.

Origen.¹ Christ, who calls himself "the light of the world," was, according to the Evangelist,² the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Isaiah in his prophecy³ speaks of the Messiah as "a light to the Gentiles." Therefore, in the thought of the Church fathers, the material Sun, the source of light, became a mystic symbol of Christ. Moreover, the Moon, which reflects the glory of the Sun, became in their eyes an image of the Church, which reflects the glory of Christ;⁴ for the Moon, like the Church, seems to wane, but never passes away.⁵

The four figures at the corners of the disk are undoubtedly the four rivers of Paradise. In the mosaic of Aosta to which we have already referred are precisely similar figures, which are plainly labelled Pison, Gihon, Tigris (instead of the Hiddekel of our English Bible), and Euphrates.⁶ Now, in the thought of the Middle Ages, these rivers of Paradise were full of profound significance. St. Ambrose⁷ saw in the fountain of Paradise, whence the four streams derive their waters, the image of Christ, who said, "If any thirst, let him come to me and drink." The rivers themselves, which flowed from Christ, the central source, hid many mysteries. Sometimes they were interpreted as symbols of the four evangelists, as at Aosta; sometimes as figures of the four ages of the world, as in St. Ambrose. But a third interpretation, preferred by St. Ambrose, is that chosen by the artist of the Piacenza mosaic. Christ, the fountain of life and spiritual grace, is also the fountain of the virtues. Therefore, the four rivers of Paradise which flow from him are nothing but the image of the four cardinal virtues of Fortitude, Temperance, Justice, and Prudence. That is why in the mosaic of San Savino, beside the figures of the four rivers of Paradise surrounding Christ, the central fountain, are placed genre scenes, typical of the four virtues of which the rivers were symbolical.

¹ *Comment. in Joan.* Tomos I, 24, ed. Migne, *Pat. Grec.* XIV, 66.

² John i. 9.

³ Isaiah xlix. 6.

⁴ *Hexaameron*, *loc. cit.* See also Origen, *op. cit.* 637, ed. Migne, 298.

⁵ S. Ambrosii, *Hexaameron*, IV, 2, ed. Migne, *Pat. Lat.* XIV, 203.

⁶ E. Aubert, 'Les mosaïques de la cathédrale d' Aoste.' (*Annales archéologiques*, Tome XVII, 1857, p. 265.)

⁷ *Liber de Paradiso*, III f., ed. Migne, *Pat. Lat.* XIV, 296.

It may, indeed, cause surprise to see the virtues depicted in so unusual a manner. The personification of the virtues was a favorite subject with the artists and with the poets of the Middle Ages, but there is no extant monument, plastic or literary, analogous to these Piacenza figures. In Italian mosaics, such as the pavements at Cremona and Santa Maria del Popolo at Pavia, the virtues are depicted as engaged in active combat with the vices, and the artists usually followed very closely the text of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*. At Modena, indeed, there is a sculpture in which the combat between Faith and Heresy is symbolized by Jacob wrestling with the angel.¹ Similarly, in the pavement of Santa Maria Maggiore at Vercelli, the strife of Temperance and Intemperance is represented by the history of Judith and Holofernes.² This is clear from a text of St. Ambrose,³ which has hitherto escaped the attention of those who have sought to interpret this mosaic. In Northern France, especially in the Gothic period, the vices are regularly represented by genre scenes derived, probably in the main, from folk-stories or fabliaux, though their sources have not yet been discovered. The corresponding virtues, however, are always personified as female figures with certain established attributes derived, for the most part, from Prudentius. There is, therefore, no other instance in Italy or France where the virtues are typified, as at San Savino, by genre scenes. Nor have I been able to discover any literary sources which explain the figures of the Piacenza mosaic. It is, none the less, certain that there was current in Lombardy, in the twelfth century, a large number of folk-stories and fabliaux which have entirely perished, and of which the historians of literature have not even suspected the existence. A proof of this is to be found in the

¹ This relief has been studied, but strangely misinterpreted by Federico Patetta ('Di una scultura e di due iscrizioni inedite nella facciata meridionale del duomo di Modena,' *Memorie della Regia Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti in Modena*, Serie III, Vol. VII, 1908, Sezione di arti, p. 3). The figures are all supplied with inscriptions, and the symbolism becomes perfectly evident in the light of a passage of St. Augustine (*In Heptateuchum*, Liber 1, 104, ed. Migne, *Pat. Lat.* 34, 574).

² Julien Durand, 'Pavé mosaïque de Vercell' (*Annales archéologiques*, Tome XX, 1860, p. 57).

³ *Liber de Elia et Jejunio*, IX, ed. Migne, *Pat. Lat.* 14, 741.

sculptures of the portal of the north side of the cathedral of Modena, where we find represented scenes from the Arthurian legends and the Cock and Fox story, a century before either is supposed to have entered Italy. In these instances, it is true, we are able to interpret the sculptures more or less exactly, by the aid of much later versions of the stories, which are extant. The virtues of Piacenza were, in all probability, derived from similar fabliaux, which have either perished entirely, or else, up to the present, escaped discovery.

In the north side aisle at Piacenza there is preserved another altogether remarkable fragment of the mosaic pavement repre-



FIGURE 11. — MOSAIC IN EASTERN BAY OF NORTHERN SIDE AISLE.

senting two dogs facing each other, whose necks are encircled by a single collar (Fig. 11). Their tails, passing between their hind legs, are held in their mouths. Below is the cryptic and fragmentary inscription :

.... MEVM E TOT (MAL) PESSIME TVFVR¹

¹ Other letters were visible at the time of the restoration, and it is evident the inscription was a long one and continued at the sides of the mosaic. Tononi (*La Regia Basilica*, 48-49) was, however, unable to read them, and they have now disappeared. Only the letters MAL of his transcription appear to make sense, and these, consequently, I have restored.

The word "TVFVR" is, so far as I know, without meaning, and I can only conjecture that some ignorant restorer, perhaps of the sixteenth century, being unable to read the damaged original, has substituted this for some other word, possibly "TVEOR."¹ Since the artist of the mosaic frequently derived his inspiration from the *Hexaemeron* of St. Ambrose, as we have seen, it may be, that in executing these figures of the dogs, he had in mind a passage of the same work.² The Saint, speaking of the creation of animals, comes to dogs. He mentions faithfulness as their characteristic, but goes on to cite a passage of Isaiah:³ "His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant; they are all dumb dogs; they cannot bark, sleeping, lying down loving to slumber." Therefore the Saint observes, there are two kinds of dogs: those who know how to bark in behalf of their masters and know how to defend his house, and those who by sloth are silent and neglect their charge. The careless Christian resembles the latter, for when raging wolves invade the sheepfold of the Church, he, by failure to cry out, betrays the trust which has been committed to him.

Can it be that the artist of the Piacenza mosaic has sought to express the silence of the dogs by stopping their mouths with their tails?

In the middle of the seventeenth century there was still to be seen in the church a fourth mosaic which has since disappeared, but which Campi has described as follows: "vn laberinto con dentro il Minotauro, e sotto il laberinto verso la porta del Tempio vi fece porre questi quattro versi, che saggiamenti ci auuisano, benchè con rozo stile, caratteri al costume antico, di sapersi guardare dai vitiij, e dall' intricato viuere del Mondo per essere poscia molto malageuole al' l' huomo lo sbrugarsene."

HVNC MVNDVM TIPICE LABERINTHVS DENOTAT ISTE
INTRANTI LARGVS, REDEVNTI SETNIMIS (=sed nimis) ARTVS
SIC MVNDO CAPTVS, VICIORVM MOLE GRAVATVS
VIX VALET AD VITE DOCTRINAM QVISQVE REDIRE ⁴

¹ Many similar changes were wrought in the inscriptions by the restorers of the mosaic pavement of the cathedral of Novara.

² VII, 6, 17, ed. Migne, *Pat. Lat.* 14, 263.

³ Isaiah lvi. 10.

⁴ *Loc. cit.*

It may, indeed, cause some surprise that so pagan a subject as the representation of the labyrinth and minotaur should have been chosen for the pavement of a Christian church. The labyrinth, however, doubtless borrowed from pagan antiquity, — it is depicted on two ancient pavements of Switzerland, described by Otto Jahn,¹ — was not uncommon in church pavements of the Middle Ages. One doubtless quite similar to that of San Savino, in the choir of San Michele at Pavia, has been described by Ciampini,² and it will be recalled that in the cathedrals of Northern France, such as Amiens and Reims, the pavement was regularly adorned with a labyrinth. The symbolism of such designs is happily made clear by the inscription of San Savino, preserved by Campi.

In addition to the mosaic of the labyrinth, Campi has recorded the existence of another monument at San Savino, which is no longer extant: “Sopra di esso poi verso l’ Altar maggiore venne figurata vna meza statua di huomo (che sembra si nomasse Giouan Filippo, e forse fù il mastro di tal opera) con vn coltello in mano, e sotto di lui il seguente epitafio:

IOHNS PHIPVS SV MEDIETATIS AMICVS³

HOC FECIT PRESENS CELESTIA PREMIA QVERENS”

On the strength of this passage it is stated in most of the guide-books that Giovanni Filippo was the artist who executed the mosaics. This, however, cannot be. Campi must have been mistaken when he understood the inscription to refer to the mosaic, although his notice is so meagre that it is impossible to say exactly what was meant by the *hoc* which Giovanni Filippo made. At all events, certain it is that Giovanni Filippo could not have been an artist of the twelfth century, since the name savors of a much later epoch.

The church of San Savino is in the main a homogeneous and exceedingly well-preserved monument of 1107. From 903 date two capitals in the crypt. The remains of the earlier apse and

¹ *Archäologische Beiträge*, Berlin, Reimer, 1847. 12mo, p. 271.

² Giovanni Ciampini, *Vetera monumenta*, Roma, Komarek und Bernabò, 1690–1699. 2 vols. 4to. Vol. II, 2, p. 4.

³ *Iohannes Philipus summae pietatis amicus.*

the campanile are certainly older than the present church, and in all probability belong to the edifice of 1005.

In the history of Lombard architecture San Savino, thus an authentically dated monument of 1107, is of immense importance, since it enables us by comparison to establish the dates of many other edifices. The chronology of the Lombard style during the first half of the eleventh century has now been fairly well established. Beginning with San Vincenzo of Galliano, consecrated in 1007, and ending with Sannazzaro Sesia, begun in 1040, there is extant an admirable series of monuments, many authentically dated, which fully illustrate the growth and development of the style. There is, how-

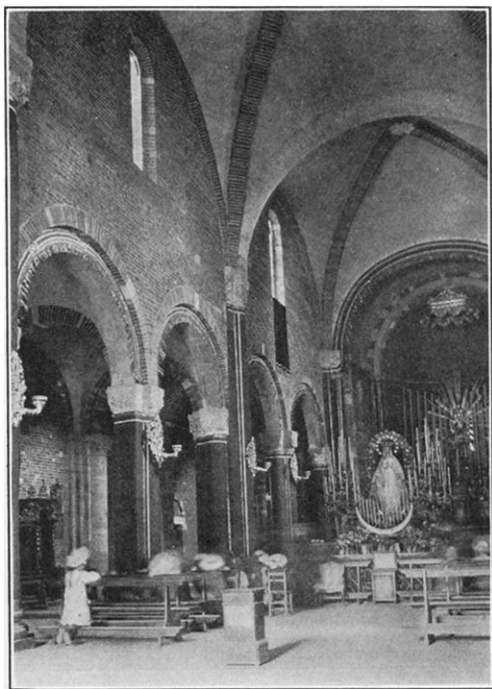


FIGURE 12. — GENERAL VIEW OF INTERIOR OF
SAN SAVINO.

ever, a great lack of dated monuments of the second half of the eleventh century. Hitherto we have had only Santo Stefano and San Nazaro of Milan, both begun in 1075, and the Chiesa d' Aurona of the same city, begun in 1099, to enable us to fix the chronology. But it was by no means certain that these edifices, although begun at the stated dates, might not have been finished long afterwards, and to find an authentically dated consecration it has been necessary to go into the second quarter of the twelfth century to San Giorgio in Palazzo at Milan (1029) and to San Pietro in Ciel d' Oro at Pavia (1132). Now San Savino at Piacenza, consecrated in 1107, shows a style far less

advanced than that of San Giorgio or of San Pietro, on the one hand, and far more advanced than that of Santo Stefano and San Nazaro, on the other, while it is strikingly similar to that of the Chiesa d' Aurona. It is therefore certain that Santo Stefano and San Nazaro actually were erected immediately after 1075, and the Chiesa d' Aurona immediately after 1099. Sant' Ambrogio at Milan, some parts of which are earlier in style than Santo Stefano and San Nazaro, must have been begun earlier



FIGURE 13.—ENTRANCE TO CRYPT OF SAN SAVINO.

than 1075. Moreover, even the atrium of Sant' Ambrogio, which is later than the main body of the church, is earlier in style than San Savino. We may therefore conclude that Sant' Ambrogio, with the exception of the new campanile, was entirely finished during the eleventh century. Furthermore, the style of San Michele at Pavia evidently falls between that of Santo Stefano and San Nazaro of Milan and that of San Savino at Piacenza. We must therefore conclude that San Michele at Pavia was erected between 1075 and 1107.

It is indeed true that there were in Lombardy about the beginning of the twelfth century two distinct schools of architecture, having little relationship with each other. The one,

which centred probably at Milan, is formed of the edifices which we have just named and of many others of similar design. It is characterized primarily by the use of vaults and grotesque ornament. It reached its full development about the middle of the eleventh century, and did not entirely pass away at Pavia until the third quarter of the twelfth century.

Contemporaneously there flourished another school which, I suspect, may have originated in the region about Como, and which eventually supplanted the first school. The earliest dated monument we have of this second school is the cathedral of Modena, begun in 1099, consecrated in 1106, but not finished until long afterwards. This second school is characterized by wooden roofs supported on transverse arches, by a much more refined and restrained system of ornament, and by the frequent use of figured sculptures. Its most conspicuous monuments are, in addition to the cathedral of Modena, San Fidele at Como, Santa Maria Maggiore at Bergamo, the cathedrals of Piacenza, Ferrara, and Verona, and San Zeno at the latter city. San Savino at Piacenza, which is contemporary with the earliest parts of the cathedral of Modena, proves that the second school was coexistent with, and not a successor to, the first. It moreover proves that it is impossible to distinguish the two schools geographically, since in the same city of Piacenza we have San Savino, an important monument of the first school, consecrated in 1107, while the cathedral, an equally important monument of the second school, was begun only a few years later (1122).

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